

EXHIBIT B  
DECLARATION OF NATHANIEL BRADFORD

## **DECLARATION OF NATHANIEL BRADFORD**

My name is Nathaniel Bradford, and I am a Black farmer in Oklahoma. I am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this declaration.

1. I am a member of one of Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project and I have a substantial interest in the outcome of this litigation.
2. I want amicus Rural Coalition and amicus Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc to represent my interests in this lawsuit, *Faust v. Vilsack*, No. 1:21-cv-548 (E.D. Wis.).
3. I live in Creek County in the state of Oklahoma.
4. I offer the following personal narrative:

I have been farming and ranching for thirty years and know the community of minority farmers and ranchers in the counties of Okfuskee, Creek and Okmulgee counties in Oklahoma. The USDS Farm Services Agency (FSA) has a known track record of not working with minority farmers in these counties. I farm 2000 acres, mostly leased in several counties, making my operation one of the largest farms owned by an African American rancher. I feel I have been continuously discriminated against in the FSA offices in both Payne and Okfuskee County. My complaints of discrimination have been of no avail. I've filed formal civil rights complaints; I filed an appeal to the National Appeals Division, and I've discussed this situation with my neighboring farms and organizations with which I work. I filed one complaint with USDA, and it was denied due to them stating the filing time. We've been subject to discrimination on multiple occasions which are all documented.

My experiences with FSA and other agencies of the USDA are similar to other smaller minority farmers/ ranchers. The size of our farms/ranch does not matter; we are all subjects of bad

local government agents. For the past 15 years, I have been repaying FSA on a farm ownership without adequate servicing of the loan which is required by federal government regulations.

I have been in mediation for years. I hired lawyer to help him to work out more favorable terms with FSA including a debt restructuring. I learned during the mediation that my attorney was having a private conversation with the FSA people prospecting for more clients instead of instead of representing me.

Last year, I tried to get a new loan to build a new barn to replace one that is over 100 years old and in poor condition. Even though this barn had not been included on my appraisal nor had they required me to insure it. They suddenly they told me it was understood that the barn was included. They appraised it at \$30,000 and required me to me repay that amount in order to remove the lien. Now they said that the barn is of no value, and have removed the lien, but they increased the appraisal by \$30,000. This decisions flies in the face of known convention in borrowing – they have inflated the value of an asset that is essentially worthless and then increased the appraised value anyhow, making my cost of borrowing to finance the new barn I really need prohibitive. This is tantamount to a predatory lending.

I had 110 head of cattle in 2005. Due to the drought of 2007, I lost most of my herd. Climate change is a key factor limiting in my ability to scale up my operation. I was down to 15 cows and after hard work, have rebuild to 115 head of cattle after almost 20 years. During the pandemic, I saw the opportunity to scale up production, and a new barn was part of my plan.

During the pandemic I sought to participate in the CFAP program. I feel I was subjected to extra processes and scrutiny to secure my participation. These roadblocks to participation seem to have been created by the FSA county committee only certain farmers. Other Black farmers have

experienced similar situations. White farmers get more government support including emergency assistance.

I am currently a borrower with the Farm Service Agency. I have a farm ownership and a farm operating loan, and also have a bank loan guaranteed by the Farm Service Agency. I have received a letter from Farm Service Agency saying that I'm eligible to have my debt paid off. I have not yet received a formal offer to pay. During the pandemic, I have been impacted by many factors, including market challenges with cattle prices inflation and feed and fertilizer and other costs I've had to delay production due to lack of the necessary services to operate.

I have made plans based on the proposed loan forgiveness. The delay in these payments will cause me financial harm due to my past due balances, delayed farm and ranch activities and not being able to purchase necessary supplies such as fertilizer feed seed and fuel. We have put all of our savings into our farm in order to improve production. If I don't receive this assistance as promised, we will go bankrupt because we have payments to the USDA and others that we simply will not be able to pay; therefore, our ranch is in serious jeopardy.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: \_\_6-22-2021\_\_\_\_\_

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nathaniel Bradford

Nathaniel Bradford